



Biotechnology Innovation Organization
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Testimony of the Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO)

**Hearing of the Maine Legislature's Joint Committee on Marine Resources
March 16, 2023**

Senator Cameron Reny, Chair
Representative Allison Hepler, Chair
Marine Resources Committee
Maine Legislature
Cross Building, Room 209
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: In Opposition to LD 586, An Act to Protect Maine Fisheries from the Effects of Industrial Recirculating Aquaculture Operations

I submit this testimony today on behalf of the Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO) in opposition to LD 586, **"An Act to Protect Maine Fisheries from the Effects of Industrial Recirculating Aquaculture Operations."** **BIO specifically objects to the provision on page two, line 13 banning the use of aquaculture feed containing genetically modified ingredients.**

BIO is a Washington, DC-based trade group representing more than 1,100 biotechnology companies – including some in Maine - academic institutions, state biotechnology centers, and related organizations across the United States and 31 other nations that are involved in the research and development of healthcare, agricultural, industrial, and environmental biotechnology products.

Maine's biotechnology sector is comprised of 575 establishments, employing 10,374 people who earn an average annual salary of \$89,095. Bioscience industry employment in Maine grew by 20 percent from 2018 through 2021.

Aquaculture feed is often soy and corn based and, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), more than 90 percent of the corn and soybeans grown in the United States are genetically modified. LD 586 arbitrarily limits the choice of aquaculture operators to use the cheapest and most plentiful feed. Moreover, BIO is not aware of a genetically engineered or modified animal that is used as aquaculture feed; however, it would be subject to FDA approval prior any such use.

Most importantly, it is important to note that crops and food derived from modern biotechnology (GMOs) are safe. Since being introduced to U.S. markets in 1996,



not a single person or animal has become sick from eating biotech foods or feeds because the product was produced by biotechnology. The USDA, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Food and Drug Administration have all found biotech crops to be safe for humans, animals, and the environment. The *American Medical Association* agrees and believes biotech plants have the potential to improve nutrition and prevent and cure disease, and the *World Health Organization* says biotech crops can help developing nations overcome food security problems.

The comprehensive federal regulatory review process - that includes the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, USDA, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - has determined that foods produced using genetic engineering are safe and not materially different in any way from those made using other methods. This is consistent with scientific research conducted and reviewed by both federal agencies and private entities. As such, there is no justification for arbitrarily banning genetically modified aquaculture feed.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in opposition to LD 586. I respectfully ask that you oppose this legislation, as it is contrary to science and real-world experiences from the last 25 plus years. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 365-6436 or gharrington@bio.org if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Gene Harrington
Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO)

About BIO

BIO is a national trade organization, based in Washington, DC, representing more than 1,100 biotechnology companies, academic institutions, state biotechnology centers, and related organizations across the United States and 31 other nations. BIO members are involved in the research and development of healthcare, agricultural, industrial, and environmental biotechnology products. Biotechnology researchers expand the boundaries of science to benefit mankind by providing better healthcare, enhanced agriculture, and a cleaner and safer environment.

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